

Urban inclusion of international migrants: a further challenge for the cities of the South

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Introduction*

Urbanization processes that developing countries experienced during the last decades, and the consequent urban explosion in terms of both cities' physic expansion and demographic growth, have often been considered the principal factors inhibiting sustainable urban development and inevitably leading to an overall crisis in the cities of the South. The various attempts made to hinder rural to urban migration and to prevent massive new settlement in urban areas have been unsuccessful and ineffective. Moreover, *apparently incomprehensibly*, these movements continued even when internal migrants became well aware of the difficult environment they would find when arriving in the city: inadequate housing conditions, insecurity of tenure, scarce or no access to basic services, high levels of crime and violence, marginalisation in the labour market and exclusion from many other social, civic and political opportunities. Nothing could discourage these alarming mass movements and again, *apparently incomprehensibly*, target cities not only did not collapse but also continued to maintain and even strengthen their role as the principle engines of national growth, with a renewed dynamism and energy. The fact of the matter is that mobile populations are the norm in human history, not the exception. Mobility can have overwhelming positive impacts on processes of change, contributing to the interchange of new ideas across different locations and providing labour to growth processes when and where they occur, and they principally occur in urban areas (Allis and Harris, 2004).

However, if on the one hand experience shows that migration inflows cannot be blocked, on the other it is today widely acknowledged that their effects on the urban fabric need to be tightly governed. Decentralization policies had shifted this difficult task to local governments that, in developing countries, usually have scarce financial, human and institutional resources to manage such increasingly complex urban environments, characterized by high levels of spatial and social exclusion of great sections of the urban population. Due to the non-acceptance that these migratory flows, although unwanted, were inescapable, local authorities' reactions to the growing need for urban infrastructures and services have generally been of a *laissez-faire* type, undertaking regularization initiatives only when the situation is already critical.

Besides internal migration, but lesser observed and very seldom taken into consideration due to the relatively small numbers involved, another kind of mobility towards urban areas of the South has often been present and is significantly intensifying along with the globalisation process: the international movement of people. A structural element of today's open economies, international migration is growing worldwide, facilitated by the declining costs of transportation and encouraged by the rising awareness of differences in living conditions due to the universal reach of the media. In contrast with the common belief that international migrant flows have almost exclusively a South-North direction, recent statistics show that a

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large proportion of international migrants moves from one developing country to another, and among their urban areas in particular. In fact, of the approximately 158 million¹ officially estimated legal international migrants (UNDESA, 2002), plus the 15 to 30 million undocumented ones, nearly 40 per cent are actually living in developing countries (World Commission, 2004). As for internal migration, institutional reaction to international migration has been a general, and mainly unsuccessful, effort in controlling incoming flows² by nation states, while the effective need to manage the presence of new urban residents with different needs at the local level has received marginal, if any, attention. Once again, while any attempt to prevent such movements is having scant success - and, worse still, with a consequent increase in illegal entries and human trafficking - international migrants continue heading to the cities, even if well aware that, once there, they will probably have little alternative to a life of clandestinity, exploitation in the workplace and marginalisation in society.

For their part, local authorities are weak actors in national policy making on immigration and security while, on the other hand, their responsibility for the management of increasingly diverse urban societies is growing. They normally can rely upon scarce information about migrants' stocks and flows, and even less about the working and living conditions of foreign people already settled in their cities. In fact official surveys, censuses and registration instruments largely underestimate the dimension of international urban migration, and local governments are seldom prepared to cope with the ad hoc policies needed to integrate people with different cultural, social and religious traditions into urban society. Yet the failure to integrate migrants and minorities can further exacerbate the existing fragmentation of urban societies, as well as generate new tensions along ethnic, racial and religious lines (IOM, 2005). Implementation of effective urban policies is thus becoming urgent, due to its potential to reduce these problems and favour the development of cities that facilitate smooth cohabitation between local and foreign communities.

It has to be considered that, if on the one hand urban cultural diversity might give rise to social conflicts and xenophobic reactions among receiving societies, often with little or no multicultural background, on the other it also enriches cities and their populations with social, human and economic capital (Hamburger, 2003). Multiculturalism is becoming an essential feature for cities' participation and competition in the global economy. International migration thus represents a great opportunity for the cities of developing countries, but current understanding, analysis and management of the phenomenon is generally insufficient. Since international migration can no longer be seen as an option but as a fact, local governments need to be aware of the positive effects that can be achieved preventing new exclusionary tendencies in their cities at the outset, by designing effective strategies to deal with the problems and opportunities offered by current and future international migration flows.

Some numbers

Even in the lower income countries, cities encompass nearly all existing societal functions and thus are generally perceived by would-be migrants as the places that may offer the best life opportunities. Hence it is not surprising that the great majority of international migrants

1. Excluding refugees, who are estimated to be almost 17 million. Although under the heading of 'international migration' both voluntary (e.g. migrant workers) and involuntary (e.g. refugees) movements are generally included, this paper focuses exclusively on the former.

2. The number of governments adopting measures to restrict international migration has increased significantly in recent decades: by 2003 one-third of all countries had policies to lower immigration, compared with only 7 per cent of all countries in 1976. Moreover there is now a similarity between developed and developing countries with respect to their propensity to pursue lower levels of immigration: in both groups, about one third of the countries aims to lower migration (UNDESA, 2004a).

choose larger urban areas as their preferred target destination, and this trend is not expected to tail off any time soon, but will likely continue well into the future. International urban migration in developing countries, both for its actual entity and the continuous growth registered, has become an issue that can no longer be ignored by local authorities. Even in those cities where the number of migrants still appears to be modest with respect to the total population, it is growing rapidly, and to a greater extent than reported in official figures, which do not include illegal presences. For example, in São Paulo, Brazil, according to Federal Police statistics, foreign-born residents represented 1.9 per cent of the total population in the year 2000. However during the previous five years, the number of non-Brazilian Latin Americans living in the city grew by nearly 6.5 times (from 9,404 in 1995 to 60,633 in 1999). By 2004 the Municipality of São Paulo estimated the total number of these migrants (both legal and illegal) in the city at some 200,000. In Tijuana, Mexico, foreign residents represented 1.1 per cent of the total population in 2004 but, due to its strategic position at the borderline with US, the city hosts thousands of migrants in transit each year, many of them ending up as permanent residents after various failed attempts to migrate further. Due to this continuous movement, an exact assessment of how many leave or stay is quite difficult.

Similarly Dakar, Senegal, besides being an attractive economic pole for migrant workers from neighbouring countries, is increasingly used as transit point from migrants trying to reach other destinations, especially in Europe. In 2002, almost two thirds of the foreigners in Senegal were residing in Dakar, making up nearly the 4.3 per cent of the city's population. With the end of the apartheid regime, and despite the strict immigration policies introduced, the number of foreign workers settling in Johannesburg, South Africa, has increased rapidly, so much so that international migrants represented the 6.7 of the total population in 2004.

With foreigners officially amounting to nearly 7 per cent of residents in 1998, Karachi, Pakistan, is traditionally a city of international migrants: following the partition with India in 1947, and the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, several hundred thousand Muslims from these areas headed to the city. Apart from these extraordinary flows, however, Karachi continues to be a pole for migrants from neighbouring countries, including Myanmar and Afghanistan, and there are actually no reliable estimates on the total number of foreign residents³. According to the 2003 census, some 62,300 international migrants lived in Bangkok, Thailand, equivalent to about 1.1 per cent of the city's population. Here too, however, the figure understates the actual entity, as it does not include undocumented migrants whose number is reportedly at least equal to that of registered ones.

Despite the growing numbers of international migrants living in these cities, local governments are yet to devise any specific action to cope with the issue, a shortcoming which in turn contributes to the already large number of marginalized urban residents. International migration encompasses virtually all dimensions of urban policy-making, from local economic development, particularly the informal sector, to housing, education, health and public security. Lack of information and low awareness about the potential benefits and consequences of international migration, along with limited resources and capabilities, lead local authorities to maintain a passive position regarding the further challenges this phenomenon poses to urban governance. Yet these migrants do exist, and raise new demand for ad hoc policies and programmes addressing their particular needs.

3. The National Aliens' Registration Authority estimates that there may be as many as 1.1 million irregular migrants from Bangladesh, and another 400,000 to 500,000 refugees or migrants from Afghanistan currently residing in Karachi. If these figures are to be believed, around 10 per cent of the population of Karachi is made up of irregular migrants.

What right to be there?

The discrimination towards international migrants generally begins at the frontiers. National admission policies in fact are increasingly conceived to filter migration flows on economic grounds. While highly skilled professionals are generally welcome and encounter no difficulties in obtaining an entry visa and a residence permit to live and work in their destination city⁴, unskilled would-be migrants often meet stricter barriers in their effort to migrate and have no alternative other than finding illegal ways to cross borders. Despite this, they represent by and large the majority of international migrants.

In the city, these exclusionary trends translate into different standards of living and working conditions, mirroring and contributing to the existing division between wealthy and poor local populations. The majority of unskilled migrants add to the low-income population but, due to their frequently uncertain legal status, they are even more vulnerable than the local poor to urban exclusion and discrimination.

As in the case of internal migration, national and local governments in developing countries have until now tended to be reactive rather than proactive to the new challenges posed by international migration. The general trend has been to respond to emergencies rather than anticipating them, with regularization programmes emerging as the main policy response to international migration. Due to the absence of long-term immigration policies and the inadequacy or inconsistency of existing legislation, in many countries the legal position of migrants remains questionable even when they do succeed in obtaining some kind of official document granting their right of residence, which is usually valid for a limited period of time. For example in Bangkok, work permits obtained through amnesties for illegal migrants do not confer legal status upon undocumented workers, but simply allow these migrants to work without protecting the beneficiaries from arrest or deportation. In Karachi, it is quite easy for irregular migrants to obtain officially issued national identity cards through bribes to civil servants. In an implicit acknowledgement of the corruption among their own staff, State agencies arbitrarily operate on the principle that this type of document is not adequate evidence of Pakistani nationality. Instead they fall back on the racist strategy of presuming that all members of a particular ethnic group are irregular migrants.

Despite the various amnesties declared by the Brazilian central government between 1980 and 2000, the large majority of illegal international migrants in São Paulo was not able to apply for registration due to the high costs, complicated bureaucracy and a general lack of information. Those succeeding in filling in the request have to wait years for their application to be reviewed and eventually approved. During this period, applicants are not allowed to work, and are thus trapped in an institutional gap between legality and illegality.

The problem of unregistered immigrants and their uncertain legal status is strictly linked with governance and human rights issues, in terms of access to health and education services, adequate housing and labour rights. On the other hand, the 'invisibility' of these urban residents makes it very difficult for even well-intentioned local authorities to identify and quantify the target population needing assistance and support in accessing urban facilities and citizenship rights.

4. Mexican immigration policy gives preference to skilled individuals – scientists, technicians, researchers or professors – and relatives of Mexicans (Art. 33, Population Act) when granting immigration permits. In Brazil, the policy regarding work permits is much more flexible with regard to managers, researchers and technicians from developed countries. In 1999, 12,708 work permits were issued, of which 17.3 per cent to US citizens, 9.5 per cent to Britons and 6.1 per cent to Germans. The visa policy also makes it clear that not all are treated equally. Whereas most European, US and Argentinean tourists are allowed 90-day stays, Bolivians are normally restricted to 30 days. Thailand's Board of Investment (BOI) policy grants special privileges, such as permanent resident status and partial exemption from taxation, to foreign professionals and an 'elite card' was introduced in 2003 as a special scheme to promote immigration among foreign businessmen who are offered, through it, exemption from entry visa and right to buy properties and land for personal and investment proposals.

Housing

Distribution patterns of international migrants within the city limits are often characterized by spatial concentration in ethnic enclaves. Even if it remains a question of empirical inquiry whether self-selection into the support networks of a co-ethnic community is any more conducive to integration than segregation resulting from lack of choice (Van Vliet, 1996), this kind of isolation surely helps reinforce existing socio-economic polarisation. Self-imposed clustering is observable both among skilled and unskilled international migrants. However, while the first group generally find accommodation easily through the formal housing market, the great majority of unskilled international migrants can only afford, and hope to find, some kind of shelter in the widespread informal settlements. In Bangkok for example, Japanese, Indian, Chinese and also American business migrants live, often with their families, in neighbourhoods wholly organized for catering to the specific requirements of each community. Comprising ethnic warehouses, restaurants, bars, bookshops, groceries as well as private international schools and clinics, these 'small cities within the city' - as some of their names such as *little Japan* and *little India* clearly reveal - contribute to a deepening of urban spatial fragmentation. On the other hand, low-income migrants from Myanmar, Cambodia, Nepal and Bangladesh tend to reside in specific ethnically distinct neighbourhoods in suburban Bangkok, with many living in dormitories or factory compounds. In São Paulo, some low-income central districts are characterized by a very high presence of international migrants: *Pari* is home to the majority of Bolivians living in the city, while nearly 40,000 Koreans are estimated to live and run their activities in *Bom Retiro*. In Johannesburg the government's inability to provide affordable housing to low-income international migrants has resulted in the concentration of Francophone and West African low-income migrants in various run-down inner city areas, while only better-off skilled international migrants can afford the gated housing developments in the northern part of the city.

In Karachi, strong group-based identities on one the hand and ethnic intolerance on the other play a key role in clustering migrants' distribution patterns, to the point that Bengalis, Burmese and Afghans are concentrated in distinct localities within irregular settlements. These 'segregated among the segregated' are thus subject to an increased level of marginalisation, social exclusion and economic strife.

Also in Tijuana international migrants live mainly in squats but mix smoothly with the local population, principally because the majority of them is Latin American thus their cultural, racial and linguistic background is very similar to that of the Mexicans. Similarly in Dakar, no specific spatial concentration of international migrants can be observed. Even if the majority of foreigners add to the large low-income local population living in informal settlements, there is nothing such as a Guinean, Burkinabe or Malian neighbourhood in the city. Here again there is a definite cultural proximity between the Senegalese and the major foreign communities originating from neighbouring or other West African countries.

Whether separated or evenly distributed, at a first glance the living conditions of poor international migrants are not apparently dissimilar to those of the large numbers of nationals who also live in slums. However their degree of vulnerability is certainly higher, at least on three fronts. First of all, newcomers' immediate needs are more likely to be rented houses rather than home ownership. Such accommodation is difficult to find in the informal housing market and, when available, it is usually quite expensive, forcing migrants to live in overcrowded conditions in order to share costs. Secondly, security of tenure, already a very complicated matter for nationals, is practically unachievable for foreigners. If unregistered, migrants are obviously not in the legal position to apply for the regularization of their

informally acquired property. However national and local laws do generally not foresee land and estate ownership for foreigners, even if regularly registered. Finally international migrants are even prevented from exercising pressure on local authorities in order to claim their right to access basic urban infrastructures. In fact, even when regulars, their limited civic rights, and the exclusion from political participation, and voting in particular, make their voice very weak in the ears of policy makers.

Social Services

Access to services such as education and healthcare is another field where international migrants face higher levels of discrimination than the local poor. Although health and education have been recognized as fundamental human rights, special arrangements to ensure real equity in access to these services are rarely put in place, even in relation to officially accepted migrants (UNAIDS and IOM, 2001).

Unskilled migrants often find themselves working - and often also living - in dangerous, unhealthy and overcrowded workplaces. This increases their risk of illness and work-related injury. Access to health services may be constrained by their irregular immigration status and the consequent fear of interacting with the official social services systems. Furthermore linguistic, cultural and religious barriers can contribute to rendering provision and receipt of health care quite difficult even for registered migrants. (IOM, 2005)

In São Paulo health problems related to inadequate working conditions, such as tuberculosis, are widespread among migrants from Latin American countries employed in the sewing industry. Either out of fear of being caught by the police, or because they are unaware that public health services are universal and free of charge in Brazil, the majority of these migrant workers do not seek medical assistance, seriously raising the risk of epidemic contagion. Furthermore, due to cultural and communication barriers some indigenous groups, who are highly represented among several migrant communities, appear to be disproportionately afflicted with disease. For example, rates of infant mortality are three to four times higher among Bolivian than other women, and maternal mortality is also significantly higher.

Documented unskilled immigrants in Bangkok are not granted health insurance for the length of their first one-year work permit. Once the permit is renewed they are entitled to healthcare services, but not their dependents who suffer from ill health on a much broader scale than the general population. Irregular migrants usually treat ordinary ailments with non-prescription medicines and, even in serious cases, very few of them will venture into public hospitals. The fear of arrest, but also the high cost of treatment and communication problems with medical staff, commonly perceived as having negative attitudes towards foreigners, are among the main factors keeping these migrants from public health facilities. Again, in Johannesburg although all migrants are formally guaranteed the right to healthcare services under the Constitution by virtue of being on South African soil, many professionals at clinics and hospitals either preclude or obstruct their access to health services.

As far as access to education is concerned, the situation of unskilled migrants may once again appear quite similar to that of the local poor: children may be kept away from school because their working activities are essential to support the family or because, even though education might be free, the costs of tuition fees, uniforms, books and equipment may be unsustainable. However, in the case of international migrants' children, other barriers are also present. Cultural diversity, insufficient language proficiency and difficulties in communication, along

with lack of adequate inclusive policies targeting migrants' special needs, constitute further discriminating factors preventing them from equal educational opportunities.

For example, only children of registered migrants are allowed to attend public schools in Bangkok, while the progeny of illegal migrants, even when born in Thailand⁵, are not admitted. Furthermore, the national educational system simply does not foresee any dedicated support for integrating foreign children, often illiterate in the Thai language. Consequently, in those schools with large numbers of immigrant pupils, teachers facing a heavy additional burden often choose to seek alternative jobs. For their part migrants, especially those of Burmese origin frequently set up their own informal schooling arrangements to have their progeny taught in their own language.

In São Paulo, the children of undocumented immigrants can attend public schools, as the Constitution and education legislation affirm individual rights to education regardless of nationality. However, until recently, legislation has prevented migrant children from receiving final certificates, making it impossible for them to prove their educational achievements.

In some cases, however, isolated initiatives aimed at integrating migrants, or at least policy attitudes not explicitly directed at excluding them from existing public facilities, do stand out. In Tijuana the public sector is supporting migrants both directly and indirectly. In fact while the city's welfare schemes assist the more deprived segments of the population regardless of whether national or foreign, the Federal and State governments regularly provide financial support to immigrant-oriented NGOs. In Dakar, while municipal authorities have adopted no specific policies regarding foreigners settling in the city, all welfare facilities are available to international migrants without exception. The cultural proximity of the majority of migrants with natives is, in this case, an exceptional factor which both inhibits racist attitudes among social workers and prevents additional communication barriers between migrants and local institutions.

In São Paulo the decentralization process is producing favourable results for migrant communities, especially those in areas characterised by high proportions of foreign residents. Here, in fact, municipal healthcare and education professionals, who have great experience in appraising migrants' special conditions and needs, are gaining enough freedom of action to implement initiatives directed at facilitating integration. Nevertheless, until specific migrant-oriented policies and practices are clearly defined and generally adopted at the urban level, these initiatives will largely continue to depend on the goodwill and humanitarian attitudes of individual public officials.

Local authorities are increasingly responsible for ensuring compliance with the various demands arising from an ever more multifaceted and complex urban society. Cities are the most favourable sites for the testing and implementation of new inclusive initiatives and innovative practices, which may foster broader evidence-based decision-making. Diversity, in fact, demands that municipal players find new ways of delivering effective and efficient programs and services to the different groups of city users. Failure to assist international migrants, to overcome the difficulties they encounter in accessing social services as well as the absence of explicit legislation preventing hostile or discriminative attitudes by the personnel charged with providing these services, usually fosters among migrants a climate of distrust in local institutions, further discouraging them from developing a sense of belonging in their new society.

⁵ Children born in Thailand from parents who entered the country illegally do not receive birth certificates and are considered 'stateless'.

Employment

As mentioned, policy attention in developing countries has been devoted mainly to the immigration of highly skilled workers who meet specific labour needs, but very large numbers of migrant workers are concentrated in the lowest socio-occupational categories of their host countries, are off the wage scale and are subjected to the harshest working conditions (UNDESA, 2004b). In the worst cases migrant workers are at the mercy of organized crime or of unscrupulous employers, their working situation being akin to slavery or forced labour. In any case, despite representing an important input of human, social and physical capital, migrants' contribution to the local economy and to the overall productivity of the urban fabric is seldom recognised. In some countries - more than half according to a recent International Labor Organization survey - national discrimination law does not apply to migrant workers who are thus particularly vulnerable to discrimination, unequal treatment, and unequal opportunities at work (Grant, 2004).

Unskilled immigrants in Bangkok mainly fill those positions shunned by local Thais due to lower wages, unstable employment, fewer opportunities for promotion and their '3D' (dirty, dangerous and disdained) nature. In Karachi, labour markets are highly segmented and many international migrants have no other possibility than to earn a living in some of the most unpleasant and low-paid segments, since social prejudices regarding particular ethnic groups exclude them from upward mobility.

Unauthorized status does not seem to be a particularly strong obstacle to employment, since most unskilled international migrants are recruited in the expanding informal sector. The informal retail commerce and services industry is absorbing a large portion of the foreign workforce in Dakar, Johannesburg and Tijuana. Sometimes illegality may also give migrants a kind of 'market share' that is out of the reach of local workers. In São Paulo, unscrupulous employers in the expanding textile-apparel industry prefer recruiting undocumented workers, since their illegal status ensures that they will accept long working hours for very low wages in unhealthy conditions and without any labour rights.

In some sectors foreigners' employment rates may exceed those of nationals, sometimes creating a climate of tension and producing racist reactions among local unskilled workers. In Johannesburg over 60 per cent of immigrants are employed, compared with less than 40 per cent of locals. Foreigners tend to work in construction, manufacturing, domestic work and the services industry while they dominate particular sectors of the informal market such as food preparation and selling, import-export activity, handicrafts trading and taxi-driving, down to commercial sex work. The relatively high rates of employment of international migrants fuel xenophobic fears that they are taking (not creating) employment and income-generating opportunities from long-term Johannesburg residents. It is a common belief among South Africans that migrants depress wage levels, undercut South Africans in the labour market and offer unfair competition on the streets. Also in Dakar, the share of independent workers and employers in activities such as porters, caterers, hairdressers, butchers and bus drivers is higher among immigrants than among local people, and the proportion of self-employment is even higher among foreign females. In Tijuana international migrants are employed mainly in the tertiary sector (commerce and other services), where their participation is much higher than that of native Mexicans.

Occupational clustering of international migrants is principally linked to the opportunities opened up by the first groups to arrive, and the subsequent possibility for ethnic networks to insert newcomers in easily accessible activities. However in some countries migrant workers' opportunities are limited to a few poorly paid sectors by protectionist laws. In any case, the

majority of unskilled migrants are confined to the margins of the urban job market. Up to now, the lack of political willingness to design appropriate measures to govern existing flows of unskilled foreign labour and implement adequate policies to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers is fuelling the spiral of poverty in which international migrants get trapped once they are in their new city. Institutional discrimination between highly-paid skilled minorities, officially well-accepted, and the unskilled and often irregular majority - openly unwanted but widely used as a cheap and flexible labour source - is reinforcing patterns of marginalisation and segregation, further undermining the social cohesion of diverse societies.

Conclusion

In most cities of the developing world, international migration takes place in the absence of explicit policies. Where these exist, their chief objectives are to restrict entry and to control the flow of illegal migration, often with scarce results. The fact is that international migration is a structural element of present-day open economies as well as an integral factor of the survival strategies deployed by families and communities. The rationale behind international mobility of people is a bid to improve the living conditions of those who move as well as to strengthen the livelihoods of those who stay at home through remittances and their potential to broaden the asset base. Just like internal migration, international migration, once started, is a self-sustaining process; as such, it is bound to endure in the future – unless effective distributive policies are implemented between richer and poorer countries, and between dynamic and stagnant or declining cities in different countries.

For want of targeted programmes many international urban migrants are compelled by circumstances to live and work in precarious situations, often deprived of even the most fundamental rights such as to be free from arbitrary detention, to live in adequate housing, to access healthcare and education, to work in safe and respectable conditions. The segregation of international migrants is evident, and their extreme vulnerability to iniquity and marginalisation is rapidly emerging. The issue of the social integration of international migrants can no longer be kept in the background, even in contexts where urban exclusion afflicts not just some groups of foreigners, but great sections of the resident population.

Despite the growing numbers of foreigners living in their cities, local governments in developing countries are still not fully aware of the consequences, both negative and positive, the phenomenon brings. Policy makers, first of all, need evidence of the potential benefits of international migration as an essential contribution towards the social and economic dynamism of their cities. They also need to understand the costs of failing to manage increasingly diverse societies, especially in terms of decay in civic values and in the cohesion of urban society as a whole.

Recognising that international urban migration needs to be governed would be already an essential first step for further action, yet local governments of developing countries need to overcome a whole range of other matters before being able to deal with the issue through ad hoc programmes and policies. First of all the coexistence of two approaches to the migration issue, one that is managed by central governments, and the other - when existing – a parallel irregular reaction based on policy inconsistencies, show how the need for coordination between immigration (national) and integration (local) policies is becoming more and more urgent. Secondly, available information on the flows, numbers and conditions of urban migrants is currently inadequate, making it very challenging to design sound policies. Relevant data collection and further research on the issue is thus vital. Thirdly, the specific

needs of diverse urban population groups, such as culture, language, and communication, must be understood and assessed. Differences among migrants may, in fact, be as extensive as those within the host society; each group of migrants moves over for different reasons, has different needs and requires different responses. For this reason, there can be no single, blanket policy that can be tailored to suit all. Designing effective ways of working and communicating with diverse communities and groups is crucial to good urban governance in multicultural cities. Finally, since in the cities of the South, public means are generally insufficient even for implementing actions in favour of the local poor, governments need to avoid competition for the scarce resources available when and if designing programmes exclusively addressing migrants' needs. Since most migrants, however, add to the low-income population, the effect any urban policy in support of the urban poor may have on international migrants must be assessed.

Cities are facing a special challenge and a specific responsibility: creating an inclusive urban identity, where minorities' interests are taken into consideration when planning any action directed at the society as a whole. In this perspective, most cities of the South experiencing international migration need to draw from successful local experiences in order to adapt existing migration policies and practices to respond to the multifaceted needs of the communities they host. Up to now, the lack of any specific urban policies or programmes addressing international migration has certainly fuelled the already large number of marginalized residents in the cities of developing countries.

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